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Teacher Plans Day 1:

Begin with the activating/anticipation strategy. Project the 8 words on the board (Google Slideshow) and ask students to write a short story using all of the words. These words are pulled directly from the story. Set a timer. Let students pair and share, then give students the opportunity to read their stories aloud with the whole class. This strategy helps students make connections to words that will be part of the story “The Landlady” as well as build anticipation for what the story will be about.

When you are ready to move on, tell students about the short story they will be reading called “The Landlady.” Before reading, use the Google Slideshow to review some background information about the author, setting, and vocabulary of the story. You can have students define the vocabulary words on their own or read aloud the definitions as they copy them down.

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Teacher Plans Day 2-3:

Read the story “The Landlady.” (There are copies of the full text for free online in multiple places, as well as free audio versions of the text on YouTube.) This usually takes my class two days to read.

Literary elements you will want to review if your students aren’t familiar with already include: foreshadowing, point-of-view, elements of gothic literature/horror genre, point of view, irony, and theme.

During reading, I make sure to stop at certain parts of the story to reinforce comprehension.

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Teacher Plans Day 4:

Have your students complete the after reading analysis questions. You can review answers with students (key included).

To close, have your students complete either Option A or Option B of the creative writing assignment independently. You can assign how long you would like their work to be; I usually require at least 10 sentences.

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THE LANDLADY

PREVIEW
By Roald Dahl

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USING ALL OF THE FOLLOWING WORDS,
WRITE A ONE PARAGRAPH SHORT STORY IN FIVE MINUTES.

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- Bath
- Handsome
- Jack-in-the-box
- Suitcase
- Tea
- Dragon
- Guestbook
- Famous

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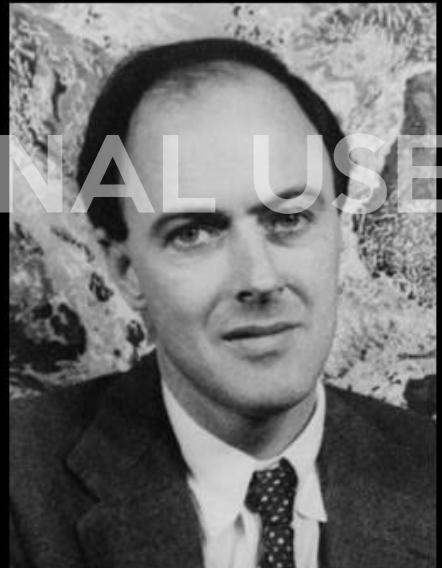
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WHO IS ROALD DAHL?

- British author who is famous for literary works such as: *James and the Giant Peach*, *The Gremlins*, *Matilda*, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, *The BFG*, *The Witches*, and *Fantastic Mr. Fox*



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- Served in the Royal Air Force during WWII
- Published his work from 1942 - posthumously
- Died at age 74 in 1990
- "Those who don't believe in magic will never find it."

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THE LANDLADY

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- Short story by Dahl written in 1959
- Set in Bath, England during the 1950s-1960s
- Bath is a city known for its hot springs and architecture with history dating back to 750 B.C.
- The story takes place mostly in a Bed and Breakfast which is similar to a hotel. Typically a B&B is someone's residence, so there are typically only a few rooms available. Breakfast is included in the price with lodging.
- The story is written in third-person limited point of view



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VOCABULARY

- briskly
- congenial
- rapacious
- dotty
- hearth
- emanate

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AFTER READING ANALYSIS

1. What information do we know about the protagonist Billy?
2. How did Dahl foreshadow Billy was in danger? List at least five warning signs that Billy missed.
3. Give an example (quote) from the text that illustrates how Dahl builds suspense in the story.
4. What classic elements of a horror story are evident in “The Landlady”?
5. Why did the landlady insist Billy sign the guestbook?
6. What is ironic about what led Billy to stay at that specific Bed and Breakfast?
7. Why did the tea taste like bitter almonds?
8. What is a theme of the story?

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CREATIVE WRITING OPTIONS

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Option A: Rewrite part of the story from the landlady's point of view using first person.

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Option B: Write a detailed google review for the Bed and Breakfast as if you were a victim who got away.

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AFTER READING ANALYSIS ANSWER KEY

Question 1:

Billy is seventeen years old. He's traveled from London to Bath for work. He aspires to be a successful businessman, though right now he doesn't have much money. Billy is naive, trusting, and polite.

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AFTER READING ANALYSIS ANSWER KEY

Question 2:

- the place was incredibly cheap
- the bed and breakfast didn't have a name, just "Bed and Breakfast"
- the landlady pops up immediately before Billy finishes ringing the bell
- the landlady is very picky about her guests (wants them to be young men)
- the bed was ready for Billy as if she were expecting him
- the landlady keeps messing up Billy's name
- the landlady talks about Mr. Temple's baby soft skin
- the landlady said no one is staying at the B&B, which is surprising since it's so cheap
- Billy recognizes the names in the guestbook from the news
- the landlady mentions the two men are still upstairs
- the landlady smells like a hospital
- the landlady insists Billy have some tea which tasted like bitter almonds (cyanide)
- the landlady stuffs all her animals when they pass: the dog and parrot specifically

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AFTER READING ANALYSIS ANSWER KEY

Question 3:

- “But this dame was like a jack-in-the-box. He pressed the bell—and out she popped!”
- “I should like very much to stay here.” “I knew you would. Do come in.”
- “...such a very great pleasure when now and again I open the door and I see someone standing there who is just exactly right.” She was halfway up the stairs, and she paused with one hand on the stair rail, turning her head and smiling down at him with pale lips. “Like you,” she added...”
- “She patted the empty place beside her on the sofa, and she sat there smiling at Billy and waiting for him to come over.”
- “I’m almost positive I’ve heard those names before somewhere. Isn’t that odd? Maybe it was in the newspapers.”
- “Now and again, he caught a whiff of a peculiar smell that seemed to emanate directly from her person.”
- “I stuff all my little pets myself when they pass away. Will you have another cup of tea?”
- “There wasn’t a blemish on his body.” “A what?” Billy said. “His skin was just like a baby’s.”
- “But my dear boy, he never left. He’s still here. Mr. Temple is also here. They’re on the third floor, both of them together.”

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AFTER READING ANALYSIS ANSWER KEY

Question 4:

The main character is very naive. Billy doesn't realize he's in danger until it's too late.

The killer lured in her victims by offering them something they needed, in this case, Billy needed a cheap place to stay. The landlady poisons her victims, then stuffs them like taxidermy to keep them forever. Billy is all alone in Bath, he doesn't know anyone, which explains why he excuses the landlady's odd behavior; he is also deceived by the landlady's appearance.

Question 5:

The landlady probably asks her victims to sign the guestbook as a souvenir and so she can remember their names long after she kills them.

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AFTER READING ANALYSIS ANSWER KEY

Question 6:

Billy thought the flowers, the warm fire, the cute dog, and the parrot in the window were all a sign that the Bed and Breakfast was a safe place to stay. It's ironic because the animals are actually dead, so she didn't have any living pets. The stuffed animals also symbolize what will happen to Billy.

Question 7:

The smell/taste of bitter almonds is an indication of cyanide (poison).

Question 8:

Don't trust strangers even if they look pleasant and nice. The landlady was an older, absent-minded woman, who seemed lonely--this made Billy believe she was harmless. If something seems too good to be true, it probably is. The B&B was insanely cheap and was super cozy looking... yet there were no guests. Sometimes you get what you pay for.

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THANK YOU, TEACHERS!

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Thank you for downloading this lesson. If you enjoyed this resource, it would mean the world to me if you could leave a review (you must wait 24 hours after downloading).

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If you have any questions or concerns, reach out to me and I will get back to you in a timely manner.

- Sam. [@ChompingattheLit](https://twitter.com/ChompingattheLit)

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